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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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09/982,749

10/22/2001

Noboru Asauchi

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01/09/2006

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EXAMINER

HAYES, JOHN W

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3639

DATE MAILED: 01/09/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.



***Election/Restrictions***

1. Restriction to one of the following inventions is required under 35 U.S.C. 121:
  - I. Claims 1-10 and 20-22, drawn to a method and computer program product for determining a price at which a new expendable is to be supplied, classified in class 705, subclass 400.
  - II. Claims 11-19 and 23-33, drawn to a method, device and computer program product for supplying a new expendable in response to a user request, classified in class 705, subclass 26.

The inventions are distinct, each from the other because of the following reasons:

2. Inventions I and II and III are related as subcombinations disclosed as usable together in a single combination. The subcombinations are distinct from each other if they are shown to be separately usable. In the instant case, invention I has separate utility such as determining a price for an expendable product. Invention II has separate utility such as accepting an inquiry regarding supplying a new expendable and providing the device in response to the user inquiry. See MPEP § 806.05(d).

3. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to John Hayes whose telephone number is (571)272-6708. The examiner can normally be reached Monday through Friday from 5:30 to 3:00.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://portal.uspto.gov/external/portal/pair> . Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Art Unit: 3639

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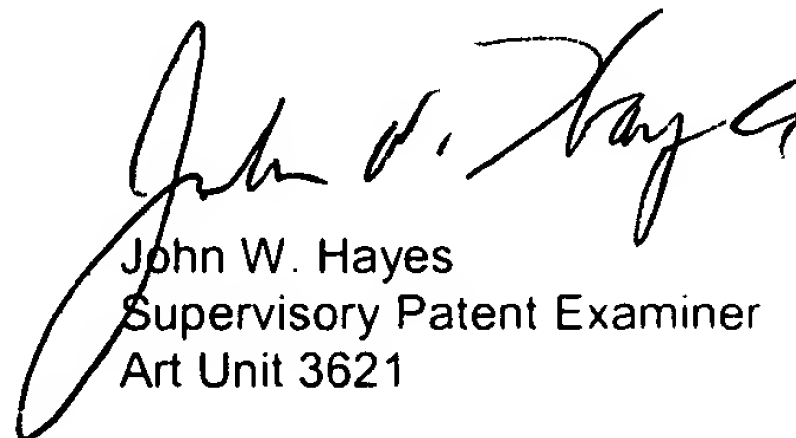
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John W. Hayes  
Supervisory Patent Examiner  
Art Unit 3621

December 14, 2005